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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Letter dated 18 November 2009 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I write to you today to express our grave concern and strong condemnation of the latest unilateral, illegal Israeli measures in Occupied East Jerusalem. On Tuesday, 17 November 2009, Israel, the occupying Power, approved the construction of 900 more new settlement housing units in the illegal settlement of "Gilo", south of Occupied East Jerusalem. The approval for the construction of these units in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is yet further proof of the ongoing and intensifying Israeli policy of land grab and colonization, which has been most aggressive in Occupied East Jerusalem.

In this regard, the Palestinian leadership has repeatedly warned that the settlement expansion plans devised by the current Israeli Government will result in an unprecedented increase in the settler population over the next two years and the further confiscation and destruction of Palestinian land and properties. This is being perpetrated in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and other relevant provisions of international law and relevant United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Moreover, this is absolutely contrary to the well-defined and internationally supported objective of a peace process to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, namely the establishment of an independent, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

Indeed, the planned expansion of the illegal settlement of "Gilo", along with all other prior declarations regarding settlement construction, is stark evidence of Israel's determination to destroy the prospects for achieving the two-State solution for peace. This most recent approval also reflects the absolute arrogance of power and impunity that Israel revels in and represents a clear message of disdain towards the international will and consensus in this regard and the resolutions of international legitimacy, which affirm that Occupied East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and that all Israeli colonial and annexation measures in the city are null and void and have no legal validity.

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We once again alert the international community to the fact that Israeli settlement expansion in Occupied East Jerusalem is accelerating in an unprecedented manner and that it continues in conjunction with the aggressive Israeli campaign of demolishing Palestinian homes and evicting and displacing hundreds of indigenous Palestinian families from the city. In the last two days, the occupying Power demolished more Palestinian homes, rendering two families, including seven children, homeless. Today, another home demolition was carried out in Al-Isawiyya neighbourhood in Occupied East Jerusalem. Such Israeli policies and measures clearly aim at altering the demographic composition, status and nature of East Jerusalem, in an attempt to create a new reality on the ground, in effect pre-empting any final solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Furthermore, the endangerment of the prospects for peace is repeatedly highlighted in statements made in this connection by the Israeli Government and its officials. For example, following this recent approval of illegal settlement expansion in Occupied East Jerusalem, the Israeli Prime Minister issued a statement in which he stated that "Jerusalem is Israel's capital and will remain as such". Such a statement affirms his Government's position towards the city, which is in total contradiction and in clear violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which respectively affirm the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, affirm that East Jerusalem remains a part of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, and reject Israel's imposition of the so-called "Basic Law" on the city and any and all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the city. This deplorable position that continues to be audaciously repeated by Israeli officials must thus be firmly confronted and rejected by the international community, in line with the position of principle that has steadfastly been taken in this regard, including as reflected in numerous United Nations resolutions.

In this regard, the Palestinian people and their leadership have expressed deep appreciation for the assertion of principled positions and strong, clear statements recently made by leaders from around the international community, including by Your Excellency, regarding the latest such illegal, unilateral Israeli measures. However, what is needed now is for the international community, including the Security Council, to take immediate, practical and decisive action to bring Israel into compliance with international law, including its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, because the alternative gravely threatens not only Palestinian national aspirations for independence and statehood in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, but also gravely threatens the stability and security of the entire region.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 348 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 30 October 2009 (A/ES-10/468-S/2009/565), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations